



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Columbia VA Health Care System

Media Release

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Columbia, South Carolina 29209
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Columbia VA Health Care System Expands Offering of COVID-19 Booster Shots

COLUMBIA, South Carolina — The safety and care of Veterans and our workforce are top priorities for the Department of Veterans of Affairs. Effective October 25, the Columbia VA Health Care System is now offering Veterans and employees the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine booster shots, in addition to the Pfizer booster shot.

“Vaccines remain the best way of protecting Veterans, staff and our communities against COVID-19,” said Columbia VA HCS Director and CEO David Omura. “The expanded FDA and CDC recommendations regarding booster shots allow us to better protect those at higher risk, as well as our community at large.”

This decision follows the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) authorization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) recommendation for a booster dose of the Moderna or J&J vaccine:

- For those who completed a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series, the following groups are eligible for a booster shot at least six months after their second dose:
 - 65 years and older
 - Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#).
 - Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#).
 - Age 18+ who work or live in [high-risk settings](#).
- For those who had a J&J COVID-19 vaccine, booster shots are recommended for those who are 18 and older and who were vaccinated at least two months ago.

Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they originally received and others, may prefer to get a different booster. CDC’s recommendations now allow for this type of mix and match dosing for booster shots.

While the initial series of vaccines remain highly effective in reducing the likelihood of infection and preventing severe illness, hospitalization, or death among those infected, the purpose of this booster shot is to “boost” antibody protection when it has decreased over time.

VA is also offering the booster to Veterans, their spouses, caregivers and CHAMPVA recipients under the authority of the [SAVE LIVES Act](#), as supply and capacity permits. The Save Lives Act authorizes [VA to offer vaccine](#) to Veterans [not traditionally eligible for VHA care](#), and others including spouses and caregivers of Veterans.

Veterans who receive care in VA and are due for booster shots will be identified through VA's Veterans Outreach Tool then contacted and advised of the recommended booster shots, which is offered by appointment only at this time. Veterans who received a COVID-19 vaccine outside of VA will need to contact the **Columbia VA CURE line** at 803-776-4000, ext. 52873. Those who received a vaccine under authorization of the SAVE LIVES Act and are due for a booster shot may do so in VA if supply permits and should consult with their physician if they have questions about whether they should receive a booster. Contact the Columbia VA CURE line for an appointment or information about walk-in hours.

CDC advises that it is safe for people to get both the COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine at the same time. Veterans receiving care at VA who wish to get a booster shot can get both shots together during the same visit.

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About the Columbia VA HCS:

The Columbia VA Health Care System comprises the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center and seven outpatient clinics located throughout South Carolina in Anderson, Florence, Greenville, Orangeburg, Rock Hill, Spartanburg and Sumter; serving more than 86,000 veterans annually in 36 of 46 counties in South Carolina. The Columbia VA is a level 1B teaching hospital, providing a full range of patient care services, with state-of-the-art technology, education, and research. Comprehensive health care is provided through primary care, tertiary care and long-term care in areas of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, physical medicine, and rehabilitation.

Media: For queries or more information, please email vhacmsPublicAffairs@va.gov or call Columbia VA Public Affairs at 803-776-4000 extension: 56519.